

House Republican leaders on Wednesday warned their members that they might have to return to Washington after Christmas, claiming that “serious differences” remained in negotiations to avoid the “fiscal cliff.”

“The president seems to be walking us ever so slowly towards the cliff,” House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) told reporters after a closed-door conference meeting.

“We’ve said we’re committed to staying here. We’re going to stay here right up until Christmas Eve and throughout the time period before the new year because we want to make sure we resolve this in an acceptable way for the American people,” he added.

Party leaders delivered the same message inside the meeting, lawmakers said.

Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said “we’re in for a hard, long fight as long as the White House refuses to get involved by proposing cuts in spending,” said Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. “Indications are we’ll be here after Christmas.”

Boehner told reporters he and the president had a “frank” conversation after an exchange of offers on Tuesday. “I remain the most optimistic person in this town, but we’ve got some serious differences,” he said.

“The president and I had a frank conversation about just how far apart we remain,” the Speaker added.

Boehner confirmed that Obama had lowered his revenue demand to \$1.4 trillion from his initial proposal for \$1.6 trillion.

“The president’s called for \$1.4 trillion in revenue. That cannot pass the House or the Senate,”

he said.

“We’ve been reasonable and responsible in our approach to this, and we’re going to continue to do that. It’s time for the president to do his part,” Boehner said.

The briefing from party leaders left rank-and-file members pessimistic about the effort to stave off major tax hikes and spending cuts at the end of the year.

**“These negotiations are nowhere,” Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.) said.**